

CHRONOOLL 84-4768
8 November 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing on Ethiopia for House Permanent Select
Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) Staffers
Mike O'Neil and Dick Giza

1. On 8 November 1984, HPSCI staffers Mike O'Neil and Dick Giza were briefed on the economic and political situation in Ethiopia by Directorate of Intelligence/Office of African and Latin American Analysis (DI/ALA) analysts [redacted]. The HPSCI staffers requested an update on the famine situation and inquired about the quality and quantity of reporting. The analysts discussed the range of sources and pointed out the numerous difficulties in estimating the shortfall in Ethiopia's food needs. With regard to finished intelligence, it was pointed out that the Agency does not have prime responsibility for producing intelligence on natural disasters such as this and that USAID, the Commerce Department and other federal agencies presumably share information that is not routinely available to Agency analysts. [redacted]

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2. The briefing then turned to a general discussion of the Ethiopian political scene and Chairman Mengistu's military government. Ethiopia's military position in the northern provinces of Eritrea and Tigray has eroded since its 1982 offensive but Addis Ababa appears firmly committed to either crushing the insurgencies militarily or forcing a political settlement on its terms. At the same time, the insurgents are unlikely to achieve a decisive military victory due to weapons shortages. Soviet and Cuban support for the Mengistu regime was also discussed. [redacted]

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3. In response to questions about Ethiopian insurgent exile groups, the briefers indicated the exiles are likely to be poorly informed and warned against giving them or their claims much credence. [redacted]

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4. Following the briefing, I sent a copy of the briefers' recent research paper, [redacted], October 1984 to HPSCI for the staffers. [redacted] OLL, also attended the briefing and remained with the staffers for a DO briefing which immediately followed the Ethiopian discussion. [redacted]

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